**Korean War as Civil War**

BACKGROUND

* tribute to China
* colony of Japan, 1910-1945
* erosion of traditional Korean society
* forces of modernization

20th Century Political Movements

* two major & oppositional movements developed (major phase 1920s)
* goals: create strong, modern Korea
* independence: preserve & protect from China Japan
* maintain Korean identity
* develop national economic, military & spiritual power
* Concept of *Juche*: Self-Reliance
* both expatriate powers (had been forced to flee Korea due to Japanese repression)
* both challenged & battled Japanese imperialism & repression
* 1945: ready to switch fight from Japanese to one another
* Christian-capitalist modernizers
* Marxist-Leninists

Christian-Capitalist Modernizers

* older movement
* reform minded since 1880s with arrival of 1st missionaries
* passive resisters of Japanese
* Ultra-nationalists: active resisters of Japanese (Righteous Armies War, 1907-1909) but willing to cooperate due to modernization & nationalism

Samil Independence Movement (1 March 1919)

* anti-Japanese demonstration (death of former king)
* 50 nationalist leaders signed Declaration of Independence (all but one Christian)
* millions protest throughout Korea “Long Live Korean Independence”
* Japanese crush demonstrations killing moe than 1,000 and arresting almost 20,000
* collapse of Samil Independence Movement

Important Leaders

* Syngman Rhee, Kim Ku, Yi Pom-sok (exiles) Cho Man-sik, Yo Un-hyong

Marxist-Leninist

* Failure of Samil Independence Movement gave energy and opportunity to fill nationalist vacuum
* formed in Siberia (1918) as People’s Socialist Party
* 20 years of in and out of power
* 5 protest movements & 5 periods of Japanese repression
* guerrilla fighters forced to flee to Soviet Union by Japanese

Japanese Colonization & Occupation (1910-1945)

* repressive & brutal
* drained Korea of resources and people (Comfort Women included)
* promoted Korean nationalism
* collaboration between Koreans & Japanese occupiers
* “Pure” patriots only in hiding or exile—Christian-capitalist modernizers & Communists
* Potsdam Conference: divided at 38th parallel with Soviets occupying North Korea, Americans South Korea

The Korean War “Cold War” Phase

* “People’s War of National Liberation”—**two** revolutionary movements (not 1)
* each dominated half the country
* Republic of Korea(South Korea, ROK): double the population & best arable river valleys
* Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea): all hydro-electric power, coal & mineral resources and Japanese built industrial sites
* unified national government short of all-out war: economic intimidation, denouncing Americans/Russians, bribery, propaganda, demonstrations, assassinations, purges, etc.
* ROK fought partisan war with communist guerrillas starting 1948
* border battles between North & South Korea beginning 1948-1949
* USA & USSR willing patrons to their respective sphere
* Kim Il-sung backed by Soviets in Pyongyang
* Syngman Rhee eventually backed by Americans in Seoul
* United States disagreement about role in South Korea: Military wanted troops removed from Korea except for advising & training purposes; State Department wanted to keep US forces in South Korea; budget constraints resulted in removal of most US troops; US Secretary of State Dean Acheson implied South Korea outside American defensive perimeter in Asia (January 1950)
* Kim Il-sung long seeking permission from Stalin to attack; convinced South Korea reached spiritual & economic breaking point & Acheson’s statement received permission from Stalin & Mao to attack South Korea

The Korean War (1950-1953)

* 25 June 1950: North Korean military forces crossed the 38th Parallel invading South Korea
* September 1950: only Pusan Perimeter held out; American & UN troops on way to assist South Korea
* 15 September 1950: Inchon Invasion began turn the tide in US, ROK & UN favor
* 1 October 1950: US forces crossed 38th Parallel into North Korea
* November 1950: US forces approaching Yalu River & border with China
* 11 November 1950: Chinese forces attack US forces, escalating the Korean War
* Chinese invasion allowed Syngman Rhee to fully mobilize nationalism to support his government
* 27 July 1953 Armistice signed
* Syngman Rhee more powerful; though internal conflicts lingered for a few years; determined national leader
* Kim Il-sung also emerged more powerful after the war—like Stalin pursued purges to consolidate his power

The Korean War

estimated 3,000,000+ deaths

3rd most deadly conflict of the 20th century